



# CONSULAR SERVICES: SERVICE STANDARDS



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# CONSULAR SERVICES: SERVICE STANDARDS

Service Standards set out what to expect from consular services. Written copies are posted in public view at our offices overseas and can be requested from consular employees. Every effort is made to adhere to these standards, which apply to services delivered under normal circumstances<sup>1</sup>. Service standards will be reviewed at least every five years.

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## SERVICE PLEDGE

Global Affairs Canada is committed to providing effective and efficient consular service to Canadians around the world, characterized by sensitivity, empathy, courtesy, timeliness, accuracy and fairness.

### Overall service standard: access to consular services

Global Affairs Canada is committed to maintaining a global consular infrastructure to provide consular services and be accessible to Canadians 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Global Affairs Canada provides consular services in both official languages at more than 260 points of service in 150 countries from various Government of Canada offices, including embassies, high commissions, consulates and consular agencies. Canadians can contact our offices abroad during operating hours via in-person visits, by phone or by email. Operating hours are listed on the official websites of [embassies and consulates](#) and are posted at Canada's offices abroad.

After-hours [emergency services](#) are accessible 24 hours per day, seven days a week via the Emergency Response and Watch Centre (EWRC) located in Ottawa. Operations officers stationed at the EWRC are available to provide Canadian citizens with emergency consular assistance when the embassies and consulates abroad are closed. Canadians may contact this office by phone, by email, or by SMS and [request emergency assistance](#) online.

## Consular services and limitations

Global Affairs Canada considers all consular clients important and aims to deliver consular services in a consistent, fair and non-discriminatory manner. Each consular case has unique facts and circumstances, however, so a tailored approach to intervention is required. The intensity and duration of our involvement vary with the type and complexity of the consular case. Even where situations appear similar, different outcomes may result. When you request consular services abroad, consular officials will assess your situation and inform you as to how and when they can provide assistance or whether another organization is better placed to help. In emergency circumstances, every effort will be made to provide assistance. However, there are limits to the assistance consular officials can provide.

The Government of Canada's ability and success in resolving consular cases are constrained, in many instances, by the laws and regulations of other countries as well as by the quality of service and level of cooperation offered by persons and organizations outside the Government of Canada. For further details, please refer to the [Canadian Consular Services Charter](#). We welcome your comments and suggestions. Please feel free to [write](#) to us or fill out our [client feedback form](#).

## Privacy notice

Consular officials are committed to protecting your privacy rights. The personal information they collect is safeguarded against inappropriate disclosure under the provisions of the federal [Privacy Act](#). In accordance with the Act, there are situations in which your personal information may be disclosed. For more information, consult the [Consular Services Privacy Notice Statement](#).

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<sup>1</sup> Normal circumstances can be defined as when the regular resources are sufficient to meet the expected level of demand for regular day-to-day service operations. Special circumstances – when regular service standards may not apply – include natural disasters, emergencies and any other circumstances that are not typically under the organization's control.

## SERVICE STANDARDS FOR CONSULAR SERVICES

### Consular assistance

Consular officials learn that a Canadian needs **assistance** abroad through local authorities, by the affected person directly, by their family or friends or by another third party. Upon notification, consular officials will assess the situation, determine the required assistance and take appropriate action.

To deliver consular assistance, consular officials may attempt to communicate and coordinate with the next of kin, the emergency contact, relatives, friends or third parties, such as local police, medical services or other authorities. Assistance may be delivered through in-person contact, by telephone or electronically. All personal information will be used and disclosed in accordance with the Privacy Act.

Because each situation is unique, it is usually not possible to determine in advance how consular assistance situations will develop or for how long a Canadian citizen may be in need of assistance. The standard below represents the consular assistance **response** time by consular officials (this excludes large scale emergencies). The target for this standard is 90%.

**Upon notification<sup>1</sup> consular officials will provide consular assistance: initial response within one working day<sup>2</sup>.**

Consular assistance can be provided in case of death abroad serious threat to life health or safety (such as: serious illness or injury; physical and sexual assault; hospitalization and medical repatriation; kidnapping) and situations such as: child abuse parental child abduction and custody disputes forced marriage wellbeing and whereabouts of friends and family abroad<sup>3</sup>.

Depending on the circumstances of the case and the local context, the response will include attempting to communicate or coordinate with the affected person or with a third party (next of kin, emergency contact, relatives, friends, local police, medical services or other authorities) or consultation as needed with consular officials in a supervisory role or with Global Affairs Canada headquarters.

Global Affairs Canada can deliver passport services related to emergency situations abroad. Since these services are rendered on behalf of the Passport Program managed by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), they are bound by this department's [service standards](#).

Global Affairs Canada also leads Canada's international response to **large scale emergencies** (e.g. natural disaster, internal conflict, civil war, health pandemic). During these emergencies, we are committed to act promptly to serve Canadians requiring assistance.

For more information on consular services and on assistance provided during large scale emergencies, please refer to the [Canadian Consular Services Charter](#).

<sup>1</sup> Consular officials can be notified that a Canadian needs assistance abroad by local authorities, by the affected person directly, by their family or friends or by another third party. Note that local authorities operate according to their own domestic laws and the delay in notifying the local Canadian office may differ by country.

<sup>2</sup> Note that working days can vary from one Canadian overseas office to another. Please refer to the published operating schedule on the official websites of relevant embassies, high commissions and consulates.

<sup>3</sup> Consular services are not limited to this list. Each consular case is unique and assistance varies based on circumstances.

## Contact with arrested or detained Canadian citizens abroad

Initiating and maintaining contact with arrested or detained Canadian citizens abroad is part of consular assistance. Consular officials are usually notified of an arrest or detention of a Canadian abroad by local authorities, but may also be informed by the arrested or detained person directly, by their lawyer, family or friends or by another third party. When notified, consular officials will take the appropriate steps to initiate and maintain contact with him or her based on the schedule below.

Depending on the local context, consular officials will attempt to make contact by telephone, by mail, in person or by other appropriate means permitted by local authorities. When personal circumstances or local conditions warrant additional support, consular officials will increase efforts to contact, or frequency of contact with, a detained Canadian. Consular officials recognize that these contextual factors, either individually or combined, may render an individual more vulnerable to risks to their health, safety or human rights and can vary over time. These factors are taken into account when determining the frequency of efforts to maintain contact with detainees.

The Government of Canada is committed to providing a high standard of consular assistance, including ensuring more frequent contact when a detained Canadian is deemed to be particularly vulnerable. Consular officials will consider personal and local factors as well as circumstances such as:

- situations where Canada has concerns about the violation of an individual's human rights;
- where a Canadian suspects or has made allegations of mistreatment or torture, or where these are suspected;
- a Canadian is held 'incommunicado'; or
- a Canadian may face the death penalty.

Canadian officials will determine the most adequate intervention for each case.

Additional details on consular assistance for arrested or detained Canadian citizens abroad can be found on the [Arrest and detention](#) webpage and in the [Guide for Canadians Detained Abroad](#).

Sometimes factors beyond the control of the Government of Canada impede contact with the detainee. These factors may include exceptional circumstances (e.g. natural disasters, violent conflict, political instability, disease outbreak), as well as local laws and regulations, the responsiveness of local authorities or other constraints.

The following are the minimum service standards for cases involving the detention of Canadian citizens abroad and the target for meeting the standard is 90%:

**Upon initial notification<sup>1</sup> of arrest or detention: within one working day<sup>2</sup>, consular officials will take steps to initiate contact<sup>3</sup> with the arrested or detained Canadian citizen and offer consular assistance**

**Subsequent efforts to contact the detained Canadian will be made:**

1. Within one month of detention
2. Within one month after receiving notification<sup>1</sup> of sentencing, if applicable
3. Within three months of notification<sup>1</sup> of transfer to a subsequent detention centre
4. Annually thereafter

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## **SERVICE STANDARDS FOR SPECIALIZED SERVICES AND PASSPORT SERVICES**

### **Specialized services (fees apply)**

Please note that specialized services are not available at all locations. Consult [Ask Travel](#) to confirm if the desired service is available.

For more information on associated fees, consult the [Consular Fees \(Specialized Services\) Regulations](#).

Notarial services are provided by consular officials only when no local alternatives are available and adequate consular resources are available. Clients are responsible for ensuring that documents submitted for notarial services will be accepted by the ultimate recipient. If a client or recipient has specific notarial instructions, these should be shared with consular officials when the services are requested. All documents submitted are subject to review to determine whether the requested notarial service can be provided. When the determination is made that a notarial service can be rendered, consular officials are committed to provide a service that is free of errors and complete.

The target for meeting the following standards for **Specialized Services** is 90%:

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<sup>1</sup> Notifications of arrest or detention abroad are usually provided by local authorities, but consular officials may also be informed by the arrested or detained person directly, by their lawyer, family or friends or by another third party. Note that local authorities operate according to their own domestic laws and the delay in notifying the local Canadian office may differ from one country to another.

<sup>2</sup> Working days can vary from one Canadian overseas office to another. Please refer to the published operating schedule on the official websites of the relevant embassy, high commission or consulate.

<sup>3</sup> Depending on location and local laws and regulations, direct contact with an arrested or detained person may not be permitted. Phone calls, letters, electronic communication or in-person visits will be used to request direct contact, via local authorities. In some countries, an official request may need to be sent and delays may occur before direct contact with the detained or arrested person.

Service	Time <sup>1</sup>
Administering oaths/affirmations/statutory declarations and executing affidavits	3 working days <sup>2,3</sup>
Witnessing a signature	3 working days <sup>2,3</sup>
Certifying true copies of documents	3 working days <sup>2,3</sup>
Certifying a copy of a Canadian passport or a travel document validated against the electronic record of the P assport Program	10 working days <sup>2,3</sup>
Authenticating original seals and signatures on public documents	3 working days <sup>2,3,5</sup>
Issuing a Statement in Lieu of Certificate of Non-Impediment to Marriage Abroad	3 working days <sup>2,3</sup>
Notarial service requiring consultation <sup>3</sup>	Additional 5 working days
Arranging for, and effecting the transfer of, funds from Canada or elsewhere <sup>4</sup>	3 working days
Other specialized services	10 working days <sup>2,3</sup>

## Passport services (fees apply)

The Passport Program, managed by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), is responsible for issuance, refusal to issue, revocation, withholding, recovery, and provision of instructions on the use of Canadian passports. Global Affairs Canada delivers passport services abroad on behalf of IRCC.

[Service standards](#) for passport issuance can be found on the IRCC website. For information on fees for passport services, visit the [Passport Canada](#) website.

<sup>1</sup> Note that working days can vary from one Canadian overseas office to another. Please refer to the published operating schedule on the official website of the relevant embassy, high commission or consulate.

<sup>2</sup> The time standard only applies when the service is available. Clients may need to book appointments. Appointment availability depends on each office and is available on a first come, first served basis. The time standard commences once original documents are received and it is determined the requested notarial service can be performed.

<sup>3</sup> To confirm the nature of service available in relation to a specific document, consultation with experts in Canada may be required. Clients will be notified within the initial timeframe that the situation is complex and an additional five working days will be required to consult and determine eligibility.

<sup>4</sup> This service may be offered only when urgent financial assistance is required and there are no other fund-transfer options. The time standard commences once Global Affairs Canada receives funds from the client's contact and ends when the funds are made available to the client. Transfers of funds to Canadians detained abroad are excluded from this service standard.

<sup>5</sup> Due to changes in authentication services that came into effect in January 2024 in Canada, the processing time for authenticating certain types of documents may take up to a month. If you are outside Canada, you can submit a request for authentication or apostille to the appropriate Competent Authority in Canada.







